

## **SUSPECT CHARGED WITH 2 SLAYINGS - POLICE SAY MAN KEPT BODIES IN HIS BASEMENT**

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A 54-year-old man accused of killing two women and stashing their bodies in the basement of his Highland Park home described himself in court Wednesday as "the black Jesus" and "a messenger from God."

**Michael Lee Anthony** glowered at a cluster of news photographers after his arraignment in 30th District Court and declared:

"You're taking a picture of a black Jesus, your God. . . . I can't stand white folks."

Earlier, **Anthony**, wearing a green plaid shirt, black corduroy pants and white sneakers, stared silently at the floor as Judge L. Kim Hoagland asked him his name.

She entered not-guilty pleas for him to two counts of first-degree murder and one count of being a habitual offender. **Anthony** has an extensive criminal history of assaults, including rapes in 1979 and 1991. He has served time in state prisons and was released most recently in 1996.

After Hoagland told **Anthony** about his rights and declined to set bond, he commented, "This is like history class." Then he asked the judge, "When do I find out what's going on?"

As sheriff's deputies led him in leg chains to a wooden bench, **Anthony** said, "This system is a laugh. A real joke. That's the honest truth. You're such important people. It's a big joke, big joke."

Detectives said **Anthony** put one body in a freezer and covered it with clothes. The other body was decaying in another room under a pile of clothing and appeared to have been there for several months.

"When the detective first called me, he thought it was like something out of an Alfred Hitchcock movie," Wayne County Sheriff Robert Ficano said at a news conference.

Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor **Michael** Cox said both women were asphyxiated. A rope was found with the body in the freezer, which Cox said appeared to have been used to strangle the woman.

The Wayne County medical examiner was trying to identify the bodies using fingerprints and dental records. Two families have come forward with information about missing relatives, but Ficano gave no other details.

Cox said **Anthony** provided no information on the identity of the women or his alleged role in their deaths.

Investigators discovered the bodies Saturday after receiving a tip that something was amiss in the duplex in the 300 block of Grove, where **Anthony** lives with his brother and 80-year-old mother. They could not be reached Wednesday for comment.

At the time police arrived at his home, **Anthony** was hospitalized with an infection that resulted in the amputation of a finger on his right hand. **Anthony**'s mother gave detectives permission to search the basement, where **Anthony** lives.

Sheriff's Detective Roscoe Jackson said **Anthony**'s relatives have been "very cooperative." Asked how they could not have known about the bodies, he said, "It's possible, the way he lives." Investigators said **Anthony** used a separate entrance and kept a door between his quarters and the rest of the house locked.

On the porch of the house on Wednesday were two ornate cement planters filled with red silk roses and a chime made of shells tinkling in the wind.

A neighbor, Robert Johnson, said **Anthony** was friendly but "kind of weird." When he saw authorities removing the bodies, Johnson said, "I was surprised, but I kind of figured he was capable of something like that. He had a history of rape, and everybody who lived around here knew that."

Judge Hoagland set a preliminary examination for Jan. 22.

Anyone with information on the identity of the women may call the Sheriff's Department anytime at 734-721-2222.

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Caption: Photo WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press

Not-guilty pleas were entered for **MichaelAnthony**, 54. Wayne County detectives escort **MichaelAnthony** into court Wednesday. Police say the Highland Park man -- who calls himself "a messenger from God" -- killed two women, then froze one of the bodies in his basement.

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